

DRAFT
TOWN OF DARIEN
COMMISSION ON AGING
REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 20, 2010

ATTENDANCE: Joseph Pankowski, Chair; Jennifer Geddes, Vice Chair; Mary McCarthy, Pat Morgan, Amy Squyres, Tom Valentino, Robin Woods
ABSENT: Charlie England, Ron Heinbaugh
OTHERS: Beth Paris, Senior Center Coordinator; Olive Hauser, ex-officio/Social Services Director; David Campbell, First Selectman; Karl Kilduff, Administrative Officer

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Pankowski called to order the regular meeting at 9:00 a.m.

APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER MINUTES

The following changes were made to the September Minutes:

Page 2, Ms. Squyres made the following change to her Motion.

- ** MS. SQUYRES MOVED THAT THE COA EXPRESS SUPPORT FOR THE SEPTEMBER 7TH BOARD OF SELECTMEN VOTE TO MOVE THE SENIOR CENTER BECAUSE IT WILL PROVIDE APPROPRIATE SPACE FOR A SENIOR ACTIVITY CENTER WITHIN THE CENTRALLY LOCATED TOWN HALL, IT INCLUDES PLANS FOR AFFORDABLE SENIOR HOUSING AND IT CONSIDERS THE FINANCIAL CONCERNS OF SENIORS AND OF ALL DARIEN TAXPAYERS.**
- ** THE MOTION TO AMEND THE MINUTES AS MS. SQUYRES REQUESTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Page 3, Social Services Reports – delete With the upcoming holidays, those needing assistance for food costs can receive up to \$100 a month. Add: Those needing food costs assistance can receive a gift certificate from the Social Services department.

- ** MS. MCCARTHY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MODIFIED SEPTEMBER MINUTES.**
- ** MS. SQUYRES SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

SENIOR CENTER REPORT

Ms. Paris' October report is attached to the Minutes and will continue this format going forward. She added the following information. She will send out an e-mail blast to members about health, wellness and entertainment events and happenings.

On October 28 she will speak at the Fairfield County Bank on the *Costs of Aging*.

She reported that she was nominated and approved as a member of the advisory council of SWCAA.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Pankowski said that a report needs to be compiled on our concerns and feelings about the new vs. old Senior Center needs. The Center needs to meet certain guidelines to be accredited.

Ms. Squyres asked who will develop the new specs for the Town Hall Senior Center. Mr. Kilduff said the architects. It will take a couple of months to select the Architect. At that time, the architect will use focus groups to elicit what seniors want in their Senior Center. However, whatever that outcome may be, costs play a major role. An RFQ will go out for an Architect.

Mr. Kilduff said a building committee needs to be formed. The Board of Selectmen (BOS) will appoint those members.

Mr. Campbell said that there will be a Senior Center meeting next Monday that will address concerns. Fundamental issues need to be discussed for the new or old building. Mr. Kilduff said that the belief still exists on light attendance even though Gallivant drops off people and caregivers drop off too. The back parking light is hidden from view upon approach, and gives some the impression that attendance is light when viewing the front parking lot.

Ms. Squyres said that a public relations committee needs to be formed to centralize issues and dispel myths. Mr. Kilduff said that a level of ignorance still exists. Ms. McCarthy added that a good public relations format for the general public is very important.

Mr. Kilduff said that we need to address the current population and the level of service they need and want. The baby boomers will soon make up much of the senior population. They have a twenty-year life span. He added that the boomers all want to *age in place*. The residents are used to a high level of service environment.

Planning & Zoning will require a special permit for Town Hall and 35 Leroy. They report back to the BOS. Multiple boards will be involved, Ms. Squyres added.

Mr. Pankowski addressed the Arts Council matter and noted that there have been many back and forth discussions lately. Mr. Pankowski asked if anyone on the board has an Arts Council liaison. Ms. Squyres mentioned Mr. Heinbaugh, who is absent today. Mr. Kilduff said that we need political direction from the BOS to deal with the Arts Council. He said that there is no reason for unrest. Ultimately, it will all work out, and they will be accommodated satisfactorily.

Mr. Pankowski suggested that we select members of our board to be liaisons for Planning & Zoning and the Board of Finance, and to attend their meetings. Ms. Squyres offered to be the liaison for the Board of Finance. Ms. Hauser said that Social Services already weighed in.

Ms. Paris asked candidly why there is so much discussion and banter about the Senior Center. She said that a Senior Center member had to decide on her loyalty and priority between the Center and a DCA event held on the same day.

Mr. Pankowski said that there are groups of people within Darien that take active stances on topics such as the schools, the beach, sidewalks, the pool, to name a few. Spending funds can be a stretch for some of the residents who will absorb the costs by way of taxes, he added.

Mr. Campbell said that the RTM, BOS and BOF all will decide on the Senior Center project. He went on to say that the RTM needs a sense of history, and time to consider the best approach in achieving good results. He added that there have been about five or six studies on the Senior Center over the course of ten years.

Mr. Pankowski said he will send a letter to Mr. Campbell next week which will include the COA's Motion to support the proposed new Center.

In closing, Mr. Pankowski said that a subcommittee should be formed concerning communications. Ms. Squyres agreed to work on our communications strategy; Ms. Geddes will handle letters to editors; Ms. McCarthy will focus on e-mails. Mr. Pankowski said to put together a one-page document on future communications.

SOCIAL SERVICES REPORT

Ms. Hauser reported that 190 letters went out to moderate and low income residents regarding fuel assistance.

Gallivant has a new car. They will be expanding their hours and hiring a new driver in the next couple of months.

Aging in Place has a new board which is actively planning for the future of AIP. The AIP annual luncheon with Dr. Shuster was very successful. He spoke on the topic of "How to Live to Be A Hundred". There were over 100 people in attendance. Aging in Place's primary office will now be at the Senior Center. It will be very positive for both AIP and the Senior Center.

The number of taxi vouchers sold is down this quarter. This may be due to the warm weather and longer hours of light. We will do some publicity to remind people of the benefits of the vouchers.

Inta Adams has been busy signing up people for the Medicare health savings program. The rules have changed allowing people to have more income and assets in order to qualify.

Ms. Hauser had a conversation with Jenny Streeter about ideas for the proposed cottages to be built on the Senior Center site should all the switches go as planned. Next week she and Ms. Streeter will be visiting Senior Housing on the Post Road to look at the three types of apartments that were built there.

NEW BUSINESS

No report.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. McCARTHY MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.**
**** MS. SQUIRES SECONDED.**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

Next scheduled meeting is Wednesday, November 17, at 9:00 a.m., Room 119, Darien Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Hohlweck,
Recording Secretary

Attachment (Senior Center Report)

Commission on Aging
Senior Center Report
October 20, 2010
Respectfully Submitted: Beth Paris Center Coordinator

It's October and we are moving full steam ahead. On October 19th the last of the 5 part series with the Greens at Cannondale "Memory Matters" concludes. This has been a very successful collaboration bringing in 43-58 additional members in weekly. Total number of 97 attended; 115 different folks registered. We have had new membership from this venture and increased program participation in various other areas... We are also enjoying increased participation with our Norwalk Community College venture Lifetime Learners Program in its second year.

Community Volunteer Activities: Set up and stuffed 200 give away bags for the Medication Collection Program @ Ox Ridge Elementary School. Currently working on Luminary set ups for the Center of Hope Holiday Memorial Lights Program over 500 done thus far...

Intergenerational Program with the 8th grade Navy team from the Middlesex Middle School: Morning Bingo 80 kids and 30 Seniors faced off for fun, prizes, refreshments...

We will be offering a historical series facilitated by Art Gottlieb MSW and Historian topics in October are the "Battle of the Bulge" and "Rosie the Riveter."

Work in Progress: Computer Records Keeping for Stats
Cancellation Policy up dates for inclement weather
Monthly Newsletter ongoing
Researching Trends Researching
Program Development
Policy Manual

Building Projects: Air Quality and Remediation
Re-organizing Craft Shop and Storage Area
Daily trouble shooting

October Program Highlights

Lifetime Learners every Thursday and Friday Beginning October 1st
Oct 4th Health Care Reform Act Update
October 5th 12th 19th Memory Matters Series
Oct 6th Blood Pressure
Oct 6th Darien garden Club Flower Arranging Class
October 11th CLOSED Columbus Day

October 13th Bingo Madness with Middlesex 8th Graders
October 13th Sing IN with Pam
October 18th & 25th Historical Series "Battle of the Bulge" "Rosie the Riveter"
October 19th Caregiver Educational Support Group "Preparing for Hospitalization"
October 20th Board Games Plus
October 26th Flu Clinic
October 26th Darien Library Program
October 27th Halloween High Tea

Meetings & Presentations

October 1st AARP Monthly Membership Meeting Guest speaker Beth Paris "Self Esteem & Aging."

October 18th AIP Board Meeting

October 21st SWCAA Advisory Board Meeting –Beth Paris official Advisory Board member

October 28th Presentation "The Cost of Aging" sponsored by Fairfield County Bank –Beth Paris to present as panelist "Senior Centers-Your Place to Connect, Build New Skills, Join a Community, Stay Healthy and Active"